



# NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

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## USACE to operate Morganza Control Structure

**NEW ORLEANS** – Mississippi River Commission President and United States Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division Commander Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser has approved the request to operate the Morganza Control Structure and Floodway. If forecasted conditions remain unchanged, the operation will begin on June 2, 2019.

Current forecasts indicate that the river will reach a stage in excess of 62 feet at Red River Landing on June 5, 2019. Based on this information, the USACE New Orleans District Commander Michael Clancy requested permission to operate the Morganza Floodway to prevent the flood control structure from overtopping, to minimize stress in leveed reaches and to preserve encroachment on freeboard downstream.

Although conditions can change, USACE currently anticipates the need to divert approximately 150,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) into the floodway to avoid overtopping of the structure. In accordance with lessons learned during the 2011 historic Mississippi River, USACE will implement a gradual opening of the floodway to minimize impacts to wildlife, particularly the black bear population, and allow Federal and state resource agencies to coordinate and implement rescue efforts for various species. The gradual, or slow opening, allows the Corps to limit elevations in the floodway by adding one foot of water per day for the first three days.

All potentially impacted residents, landowners and businesses are urged to heed the direction of their local officials and take necessary precautions in advance of the pending operation.

The Morganza Floodway is located approximately 280 river miles above Head of Passes on the west bank of the river in Pointe Coupee Parish. It was constructed in 1954 to maintain a flow of 1.5 million cfs below the floodway and has only been operated twice before in 1973 and 2011. The structure is 3,906 feet in length with 125 bays, which can divert up to 600,000 cfs of water if necessary.

The current flood fight is historic and unprecedented. Today marks the 214 day of the flood fight it is expected to surpass the 1973 event (225 days) as the longest flood fight. This flood is also the first time the Bonnet Carre' Spillway has opened in back-to-back years as well as the first time it has been operated twice during the same calendar year.

The Corps of Engineers is carefully monitoring weather forecasts and river conditions. In addition to operation of the flood control structures such as Bonnet Carre' and Morganza, the Corps is engaged in 24/7 flood fight operations, conducting daily levee inspections with local levee districts, and coordinating with local, state and federal emergency responders to ensure safe passage of this high water event.

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